

## **A. Background**

**BLM Office:** Arctic Field Office LLAKF01000

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.** FF096821

**Applicant:** William Craddock  
USGS  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 956  
Reston, Virginia 20192

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** NPR-A Permit

**Dates of Proposed Activity:** July 2-3, 2014

**General Location of Proposed Action:** Kuk and Kaolak rivers

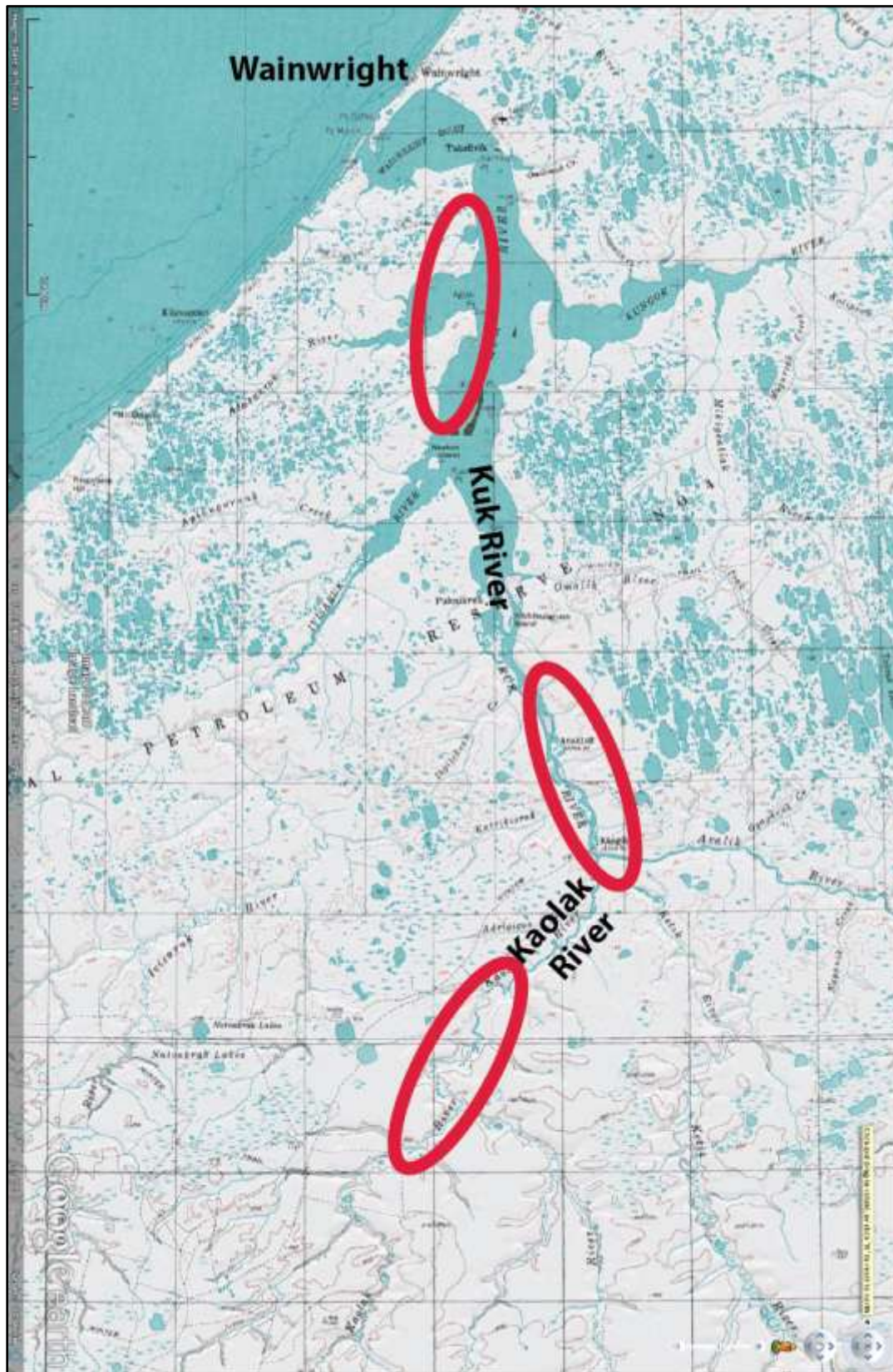
### **Description of Proposed Action:**

The applicant, William Craddock of the U.S. Geological Survey, has requested access to the Kuk and Kaolak rivers in order to conduct geologic and sediment samples on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A).

The proposed action would authorize an NPR-A Permit for research and access in the reserve during July 2014. The field party, consisting of 2 geologists plus helicopter pilot, will lodge in Barrow, at King Eider Inn. The geologists will access field sites via helicopter. The ship will land once at each field site. The ship will be refueled with Jet-A fuel, as needed, at Barrow Airport. There will be no need to store additional fuel at remote locations.

The area of focus for field work is shown in Map 1, below. The proposed research aims to better understand the geological history of the area and by collecting a suite of rocks spanning the middle to late Cretaceous. This sampling will be done at specific locations where target formations or lithofacies are known to be exposed based on published literature or previous work conducted by the Alaska Geological Survey (DGGs) or the USGS. Work at these locations will be limited to brief description and sample collection. Laboratory analyses will be conducted to determine the age of the rocks collected; the results will provide an enhanced understanding of the tectonic, sedimentary, and petroleum history at the critical juncture between the Brooks Range onshore and the Chukchi Shelf offshore. A total of 16 take-off and landings by helicopter are anticipated in conjunction with the proposed activity.

USGS has obtained permission from North Slope Borough to access field sites. The USGS has established a communications link with the Village of Wainwright. USGS is also in the process of obtaining appropriate permissions from Wainwright City and the Olgoonik Corporation.



Map 1. Location of proposed geologic sampling indicated by red circles.

## Legal Description:

Township	Range	Meridian	Section
14 N	31 W	UM	No BLM Lands
13 N	31 W	UM	No BLM Lands
12 N	32 W	UM	3,10
10 N	31 W	UM	8-9, 16, 21-22, 27-28, 33-34 (excluding private lands)
9 N	31 W	UM	1-3, 10-15, 23-26 (excluding private lands)
8 N	32 W	UM	21-22, 27-29, 32-34 (excluding private lands)
7 N	32 W	UM	4-9, 17-19, 30-31
7 N	33 W	UM	1, 11-14, 23-26, 35-36

### Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning documents:

National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) 2012

The proposed action is also in conformance with the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act which allows for the authorization of uses consistent with the purposes of the Act.

### B. Compliance with NEPA

The IAP/EIS Record of Decision for the NPR-A developed stipulations and best management practices applicable to all activities in NPR-A. The stipulations and best management practices applicable to the proposed action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant and are entitled: "FF09XXXX USGS Craddock 2014 Stipulations."

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4 (F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

**"Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities."**

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		<b>X</b>
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or		<b>X</b>

principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		<b>X</b>
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		<b>X</b>
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		<b>X</b>
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		<b>X</b>
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		<b>X</b>
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		<b>X</b>
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		<b>X</b>
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		<b>X</b>

#### **D. Approval and Contact Information**

I considered the proposed action and have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts.

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/s/Lon Kelly  
Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

June 26, 2014  
Date

**Contact Person:**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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